



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

VALE DISTRICT

100 Oregon Street

Vale, Oregon 97918

<http://www.or.blm.gov/Vale/>

Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy Ten Mile Complex (G5TU) Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan DNA

Office: Jordan Field Office

Tracking Number: V060-2012-043

Proposed Action Title/Type: Ten Mile Complex Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Location: See attached map

A. Describe the Proposed Action

Background

The Ten Mile Complex includes the area burned by two separate fires, Ten Mile and Banana Lake fires. Both were started by lightning on August 10th, 2012 and were contained on August 18, 2012 after burning a total of 14,996 acres. In addition to 65 acres of private land and 6,827 acres of public land burned in the Ten Mile fire were 3,138 acres of land administered by the BIA. All lands burned by the Banana Lake fire (4960 acres) were public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The fires are located north of McDermitt, Nevada, south of the Long Draw fire, and east of the Holloway fire. The location of the fires is identified on Map 1 and land status is identified on Map 2.

Planned Actions

The area burned by the two Ten Mile Complex fires is in need of treatment to ensure desirable vegetation will stabilize the site and prevent invasion of undesirable and or noxious weeds. This can be met by seeding adapted perennial grasses on 900 acres and protecting the area from grazing during a period necessary for establishment and recovery of health and vigor of desired vegetation. An additional 4,960 acres will be seeded with Wyoming big sagebrush using the lop and scatter method, to improve the habitat for sagebrush obligate species such as the Greater sage-grouse.

Reconstruction of 16 miles of management fencing is needed to protect the burn area and minimize soil movement, preserve on-site productivity, reduce the invasion of undesirable flammable annual plants, and reduce the potential for noxious weeds. The site will be monitored for the establishment of noxious weeds. If found, they would be treated in accordance with national and district guidelines for noxious weed treatment.

The vegetation on the area burned by the fire was dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush, bunchgrass, and annual grasses. Monitoring of the burn area would consist of livestock use supervision and vegetation recovery monitoring.

The Ten Mile Complex Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan further details planned actions.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP) Date Approved 2002

* List applicable LUPs (e.g., Resource Management Plans and activity, project, management, or program plans, or applicable amendments thereto)

☐ The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan Rangeland Vegetation, pages 38-41; Wildlife Habitat Pages 50-51.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

Vale District Normal Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFESRP) Environmental Assessment (2005)

Draft (1998) , Final (2001), and Record of Decision (2002) Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan

Vale District Integrated Weed Control Plan EA (1989)

Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program EIS (1987)

H-8550-1 Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (1995)

Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Report for Vegetation Treatments on Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the Western United States, Including Alaska (2007)

The Final EIS for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon (2010)

Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures (BLM WO IM 2012-043, December, 2011)

US Fish and Wildlife Service *12-Month Findings for Petitions to List Greater Sage-Grouse as Threatened or Endangered* (2010 (75 Fed. Reg.13910))

BLM *National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy* (BLM WO, August 2011)

BLM *Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* (BLM National Technical Team on Greater Sage-Grouse, December, 2011)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy Assessment and Strategy for Oregon*. (Salem, 2005)

Oregon Department of fish and Wildlife, 2011. *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat* (April, 2011)

Knick and Connelly, *Ecology and Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse: a Landscape Species and its Habitats* (Monograph, 2011)

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report).

None

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The current proposed actions are identified in the Vale District NFESRP (Natural recovery, pg 6; Drill Seeding & planting, pg. 7-9; Weed control, pg. 9; Protective fence, pg. 11; Design features, pg.13&14) and are substantially the same actions as analyzed in that document.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The NFESRP and SEORMP analyzed a range of alternatives including no action with respect to current concerns, interests and resource values.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, and updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation: There is no significant new information or circumstances that would warrant additional analysis. The SEORMP FEIS anticipated the impact of fire on public land resources and resource values, considered a range of alternatives to address post-fire management, and analyzed the alternative consequences different potential management actions to respond to wildland fire impacts. The NFESRP Environmental Assessment comprehensively analyzed all proposed actions considered within the ESR plan

Additionally, the following factors were specifically considered under BLM's *Greater Sage-Grouse Interim management Policies and Procedures* (IM 2012-043), and are reflected in proposed treatments in the ESR Plan:

- **Integrated Vegetation Management:**

- Proposed treatments were specifically analyzed in terms of fine (pasture level) and mid-scale (Geographic Management Areas (GMA), see Map 2, Revised ESR Plan) levels of Ecosystem Based Management (FEIS, Pages 141-142) required to “address habitat fragmentation, effective patch size, invasive species presence, and protection of intact sagebrush communities”.
- Design treatments to: promote sagebrush communities; limit the expansion of invasive species; maintain or improve soil site stability, and hydrologic function and biological integrity.
- **Wildfire Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation:**
 - Prioritize re-vegetation projects to: maintain and enhance intact sagebrush habitat

The drill seeding in the Ten Mile fire area would occur outside of WSA and lands determined to have wilderness characteristics and has been analyzed in the NFESRP.

Repair/reconstruction of existing fence would occur in WSAs on lands determined to have wilderness character, but the affect to these resources would be benign.

Greater Sage-Grouse Management

In March, 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued its finding that Greater Sage-Grouse are “warranted but precluded” for listing under the ESA (Notice, 75 FR 13910 – 14014; 03/23/2010). Thirty-eight scientists from federal, state and nongovernmental organizations collaborated to synthesize the information and findings on Greater Sage-Grouse, and compiled in *Ecology and Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse: a Landscape Species and its Habitats* (Monograph, 2011). Following this, in December, 2011, the BLM issued Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043 which provides interim management policies and procedures for Greater Sage-Grouse. Also released in December, 2011 was the BLM’s *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* developed by the BLM’s National Technical Team on Greater Sage-Grouse (NTT Report). Separately, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) published the *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat* (ODFW Strategy, April, 2011). These documents provide the most current information on Sage-Grouse populations and habitat requirements and were reviewed for consistency with proposed actions within the Ten Mile Complex fires.

Information contained in the above research and policy clearly identifies fire as a significant factor in the loss of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. The documents vary in their recommendations for post-fire response, but are consistent in recommendations to temporarily restrict burned areas from intensive use by off-highway vehicles and livestock grazing. The new literature cited above variously describes the effectiveness of seeding following fire, but emphasize the use of native seed where possible. Consistent in the literature is the slow natural expansion of sage brush species from remaining internal, unburned islands, or from sage brush communities at the edge of the burn. Sage brush seeding and plantings are encouraged where site potential suggests success (IM 2012-043, Integrated Vegetation Management).

Ground-based seeding and planting treatments proposed in the ESR Plan are consistent with recommendations in recent literature and agency conservation strategies to minimize the potential encroachment of invasive species (ODFW Strategy, Pages 107-108). Temporary impacts from mechanical seed applications are benign, given the loss of sage brush communities due to the burn, have the greatest potential to preclude invasion of adjacent non-native invasive grasses and noxious weeds, and hold the highest probability for success in expediting the restoration of sage brush dependent species.

Non-native seed species, along with sagebrush treatments proposed in the ESR Plan are consistent with BLM Interim Management (IM 2012-043, Integrated Vegetation Management and Wildfire Emergency

Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation) and ODFW's Conservation Strategy (Wildfire, Pages 99-101; Vegetation Treatments Pages 109-110)

Proposed treatment design features identified in the NFESRP and incorporated into the ESR Plan and specify: avoiding remaining unburned sage brush islands; selecting mechanical equipment seeding routes which vary with the topography to encourage a mosaic vegetation structure as the area re-establishes; and encourages diverse distribution of re-vegetation to meet habitat needs of the greatest number sagebrush obligates as possible. These features are included in the ESR Plan and are consistent with post-fire rehabilitation identified in the Interim Management for Sage-Grouse (IM 2012-043) and the ODFW Strategy.

Proposed projects for the Ten Mile Complex ESR were considered and designed to conform to the Interim Management and Conservation measures set forth in the NTT Report. A priority for the proposed ESR projects is stabilization and rehabilitation of existing, known Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, particularly Sage-Grouse Habitat identified as Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH, NTT Report). ODFW's identification of Core Habitat was adopted by BLM as PPH for analytical purposes and are identical geographic areas. Sage-Grouse habitat impacted by the fires (see Map 6), BLM focused sage brush seeding ESR actions on burned areas in PPH and near known Sage-Grouse leks. Design features and methodologies were specifically incorporated into all proposed projects which would facilitate rehabilitation of Sage-Grouse habitat requirements of nesting, escape, foraging and other seasonal cover and vegetation. Proposed projects conform to IM No. 2012-043. BLM has concluded that these projects provide the best methods to stabilize the treatment units, minimize encroachment by invasive plant species and effectively rehabilitate Sage-Grouse habitat, and that those actions would not substantially change through additional analysis.

The new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis in the NFESRP on the new proposed action.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The methodology and analytical approach used in the NFESRP would continue to be appropriate for the proposed action.

5. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Documentation of answer and explanation: Direct and indirect impacts of the proposed action are substantially the same as those analyzed in the proposed action, pages 37-46 of the NFESRP and SEORMP. Cumulative impacts of the proposed action are substantially the same as those analyzed in the NFESRP on page 47 and SEORMP.

6. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The NFESRP and SEORMP were analysis documents reviewed by a diverse representation of publics, including federal, state and local agencies as well as private entities. The notice of availability of the Environmental Analysis and opportunity to comment on

the NFESRP was sent to over 400 individuals, organizations, agencies, local governments, state governments, and federal governments.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis:

The following team members conducting or participating in the preparation of this worksheet.

Brent Grasty	NEPA Compliance and Planning
Todd Allai	NRS – Soil/Air/Water
Don Rotell	Supervisory NRS/Archeologist
Lynne Silva	Weeds Specialist
Josh Travers	Recreation Management Specialist
Naomi Wilson	Wildlife Biologist
Bill Reimers	Rangeland Management Specialist
Susan Fritts	Botanist
Thomas “Pat” Ryan	Field Manager

F. Conclusion

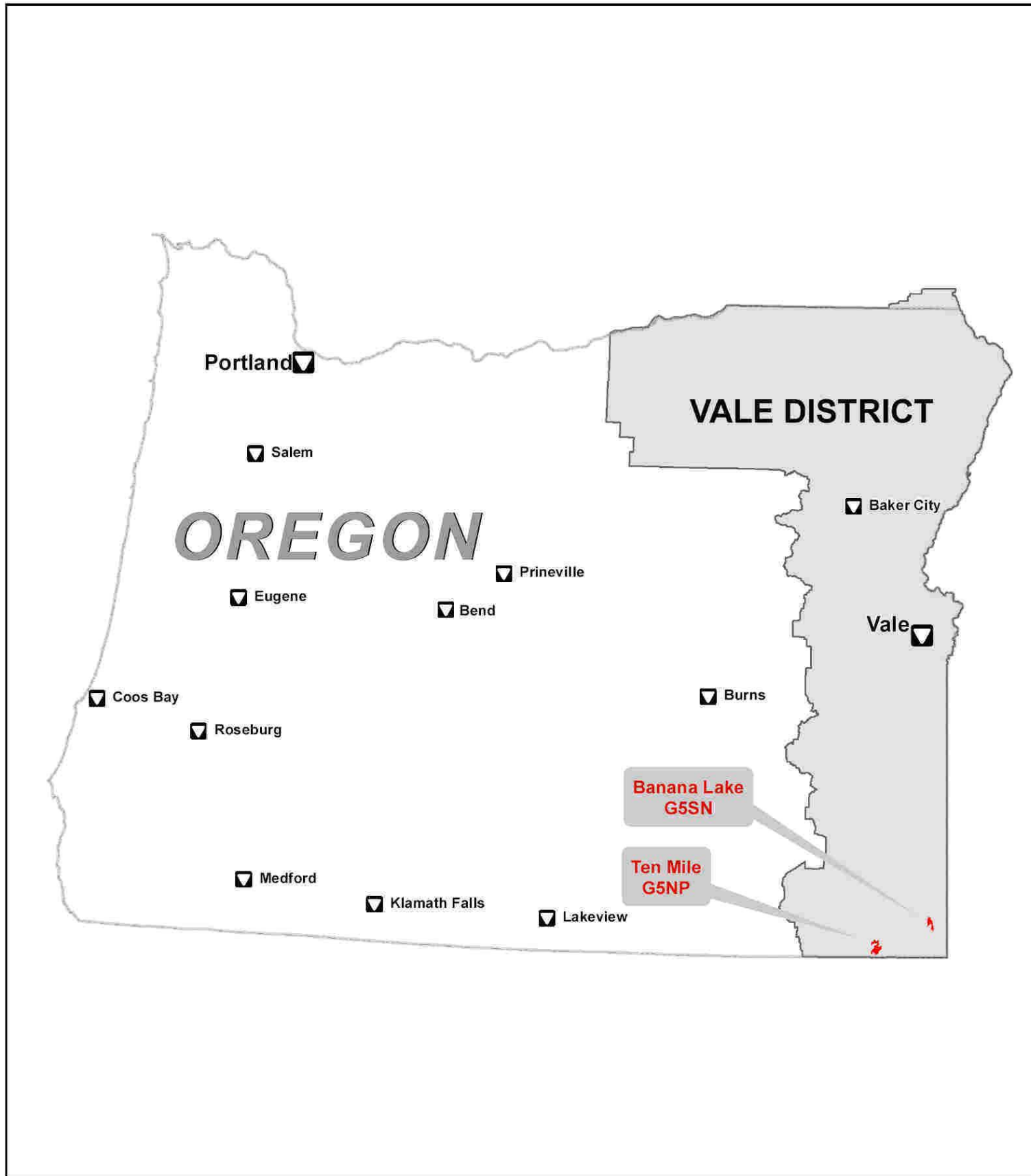


Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan, and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.



Signature of the Responsible Official

12/7/12
Date



- Ten Mile Complex
- Vale District
- State of Oregon



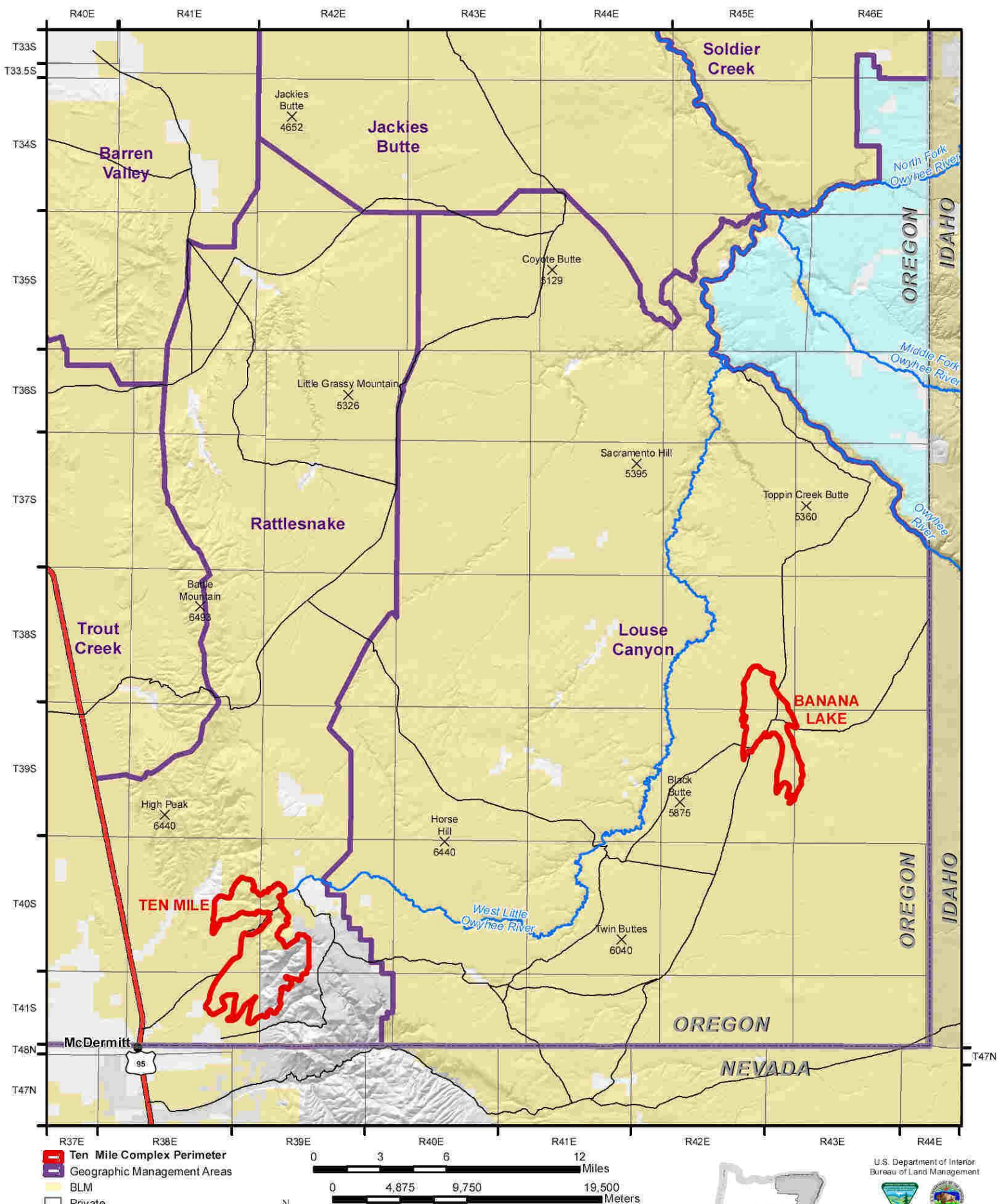
Map 1
Location
Ten Mile Complex (G5TU) - Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation

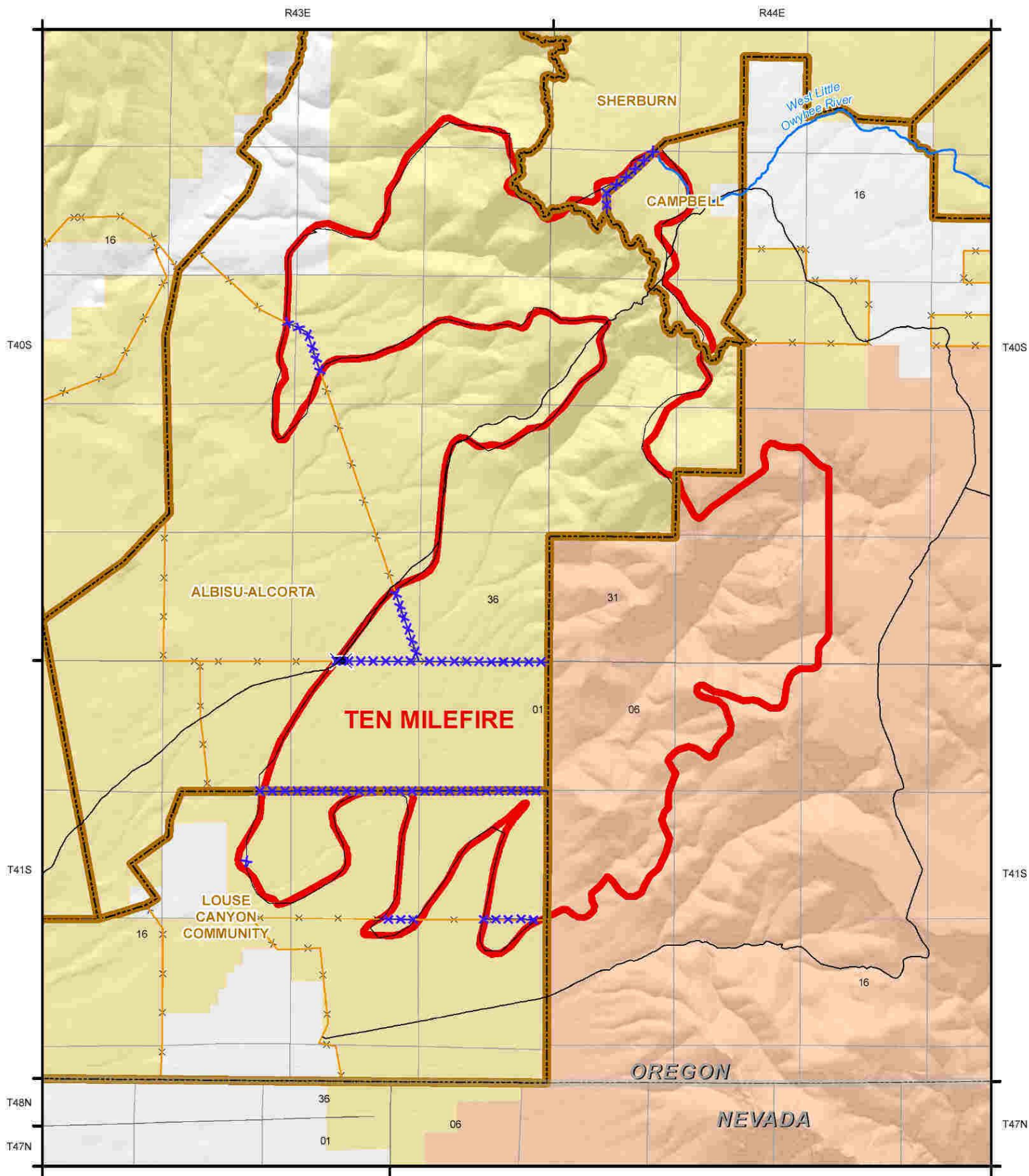
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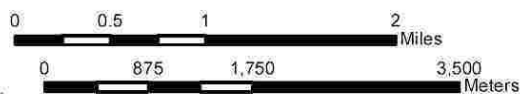
Vale District
December 6, 2012

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- Ten Mile Perimeter
- X Interior Fence Line Repair
- Allotment
- Pasture



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Map 3A
Repair of Minor Facilities and Allotments
Ten Mile Complex (G5TU)- Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation

R47E

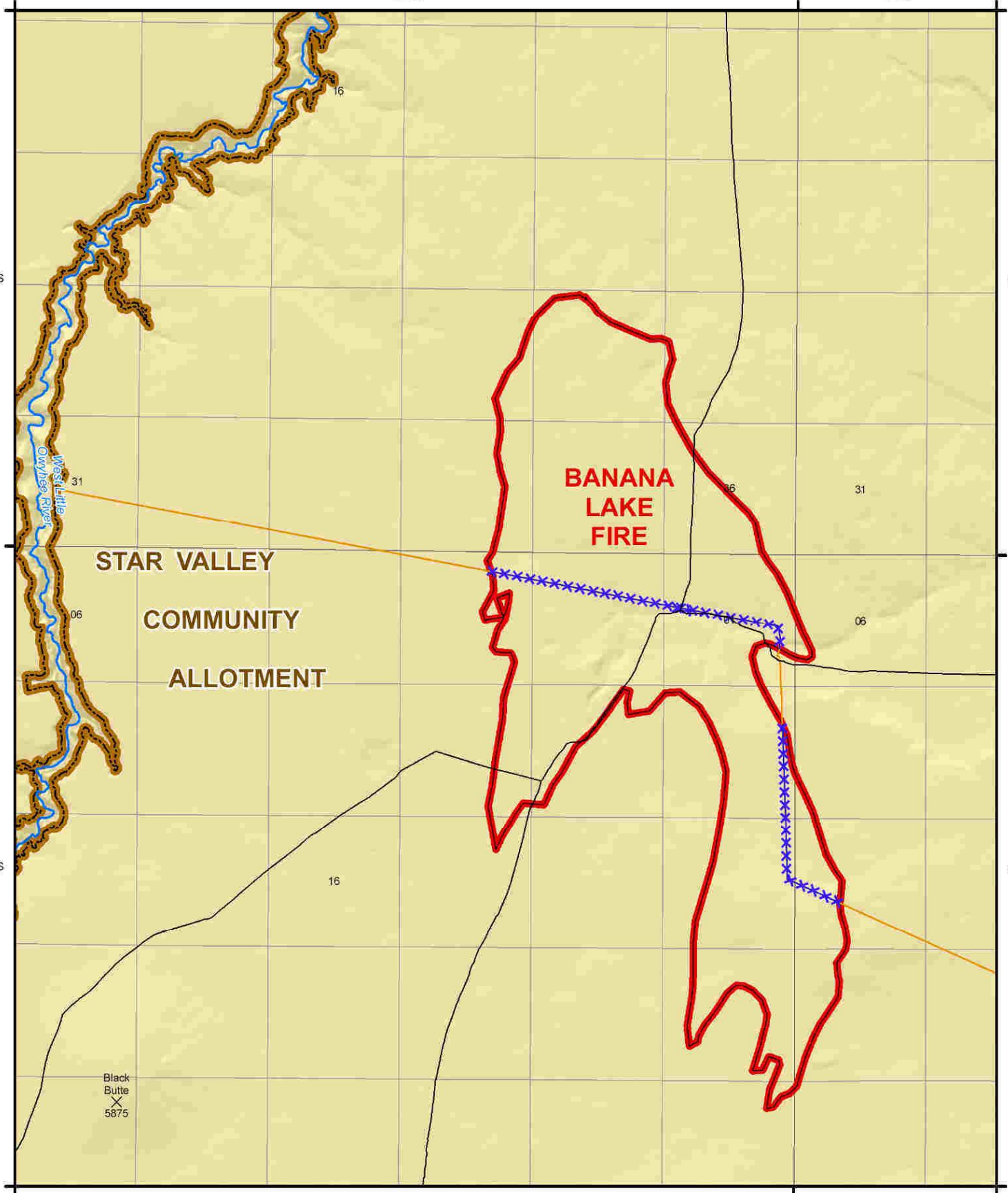
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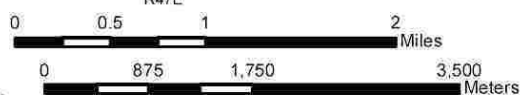
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- Banana Lake Perimeter
- Interior Fence Line Repair
- Allotment
- Pasture



Map 3B

**Repair of Minor Facilities and Allotments
Ten Mile Complex (G5TU)- Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation**

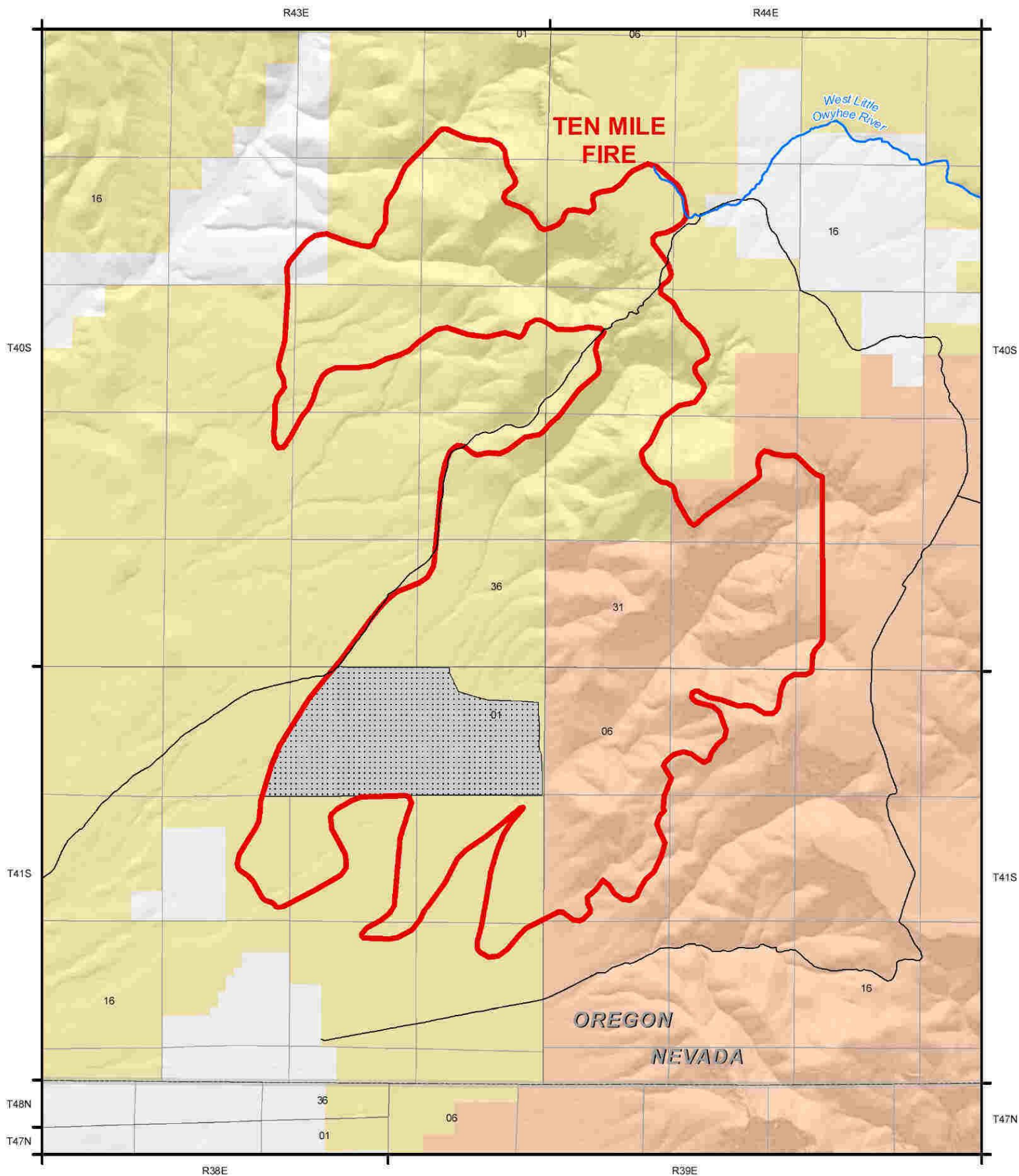


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- Ten Mile Perimeter
- Non-native Drill Seeding



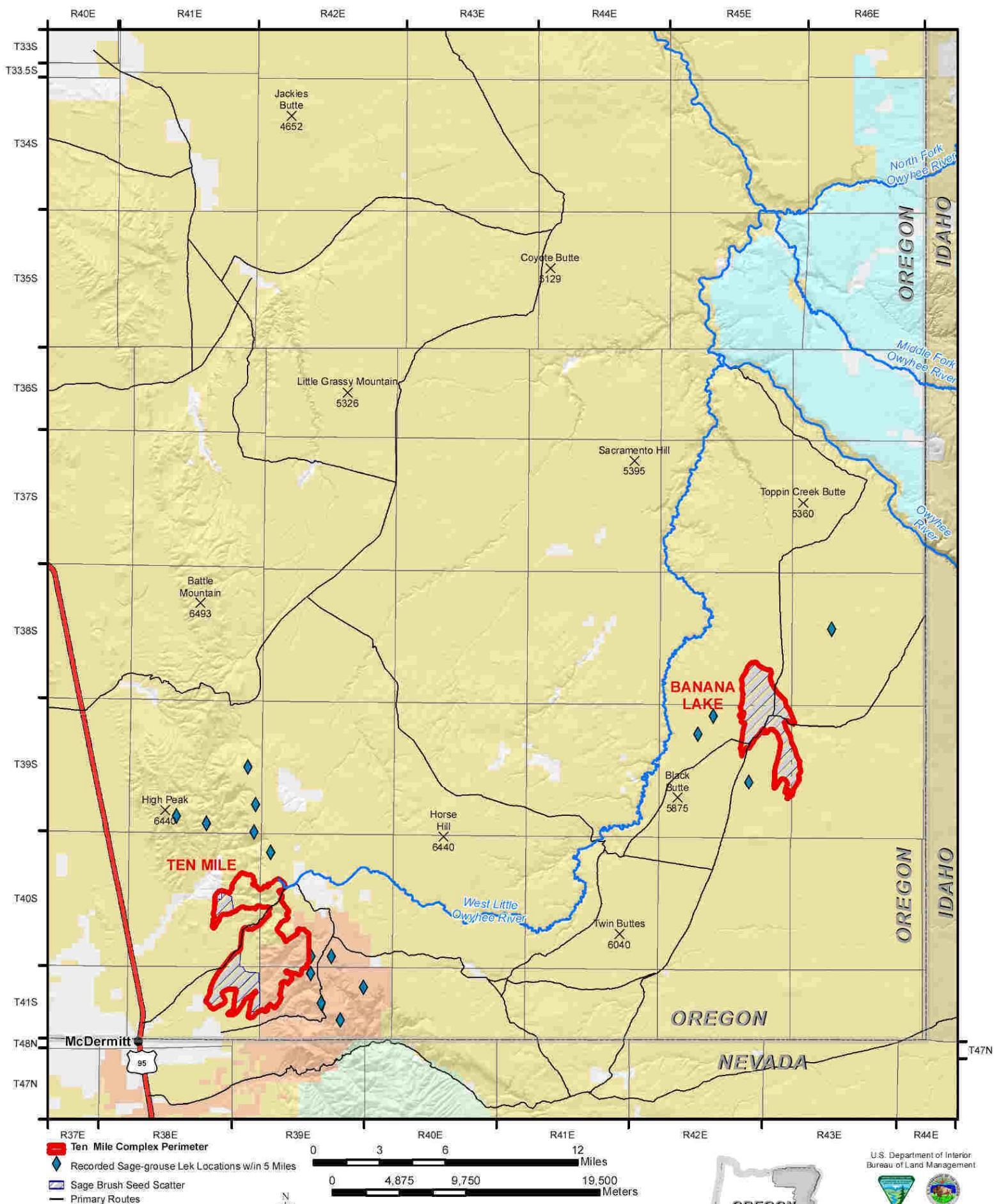
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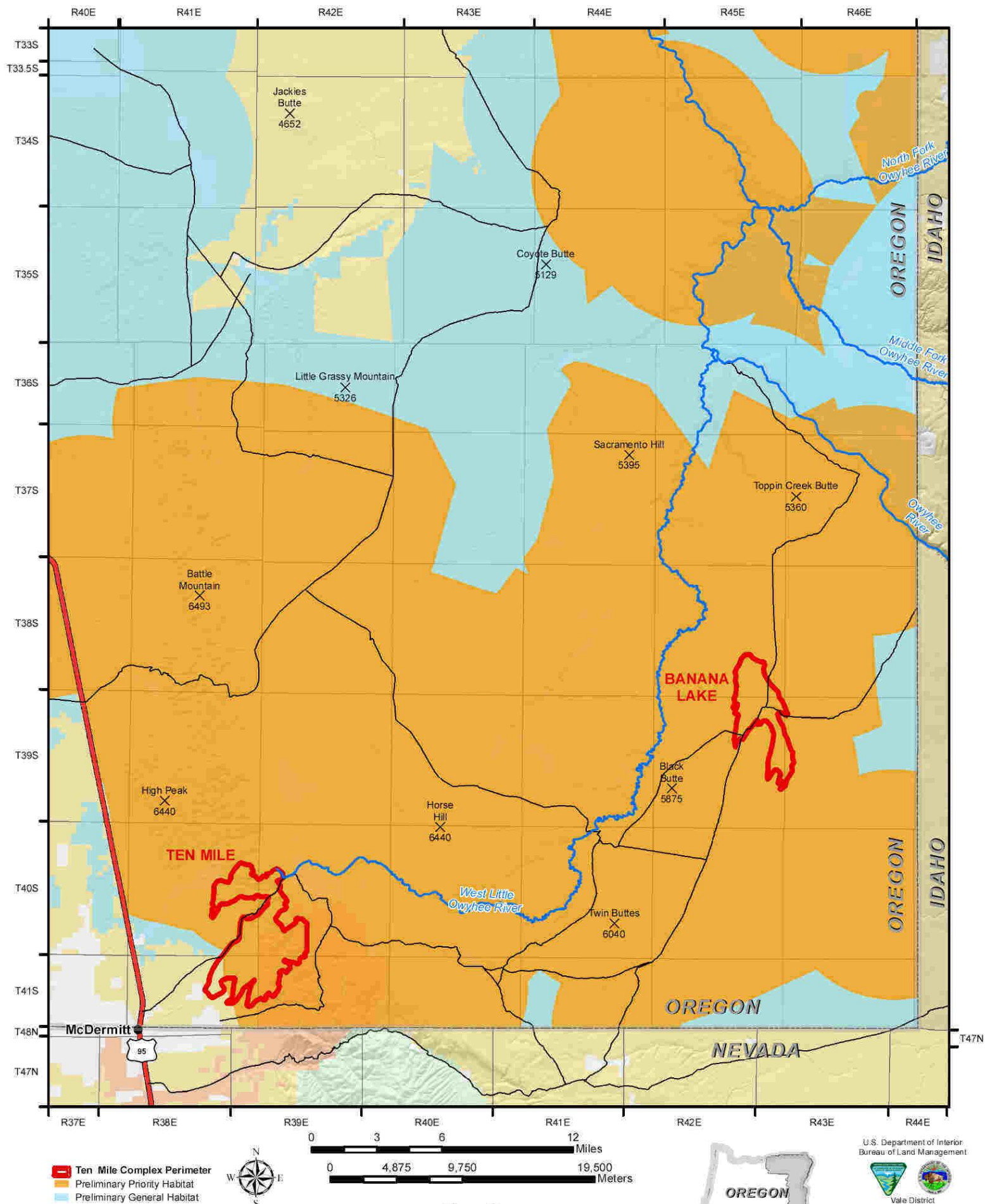


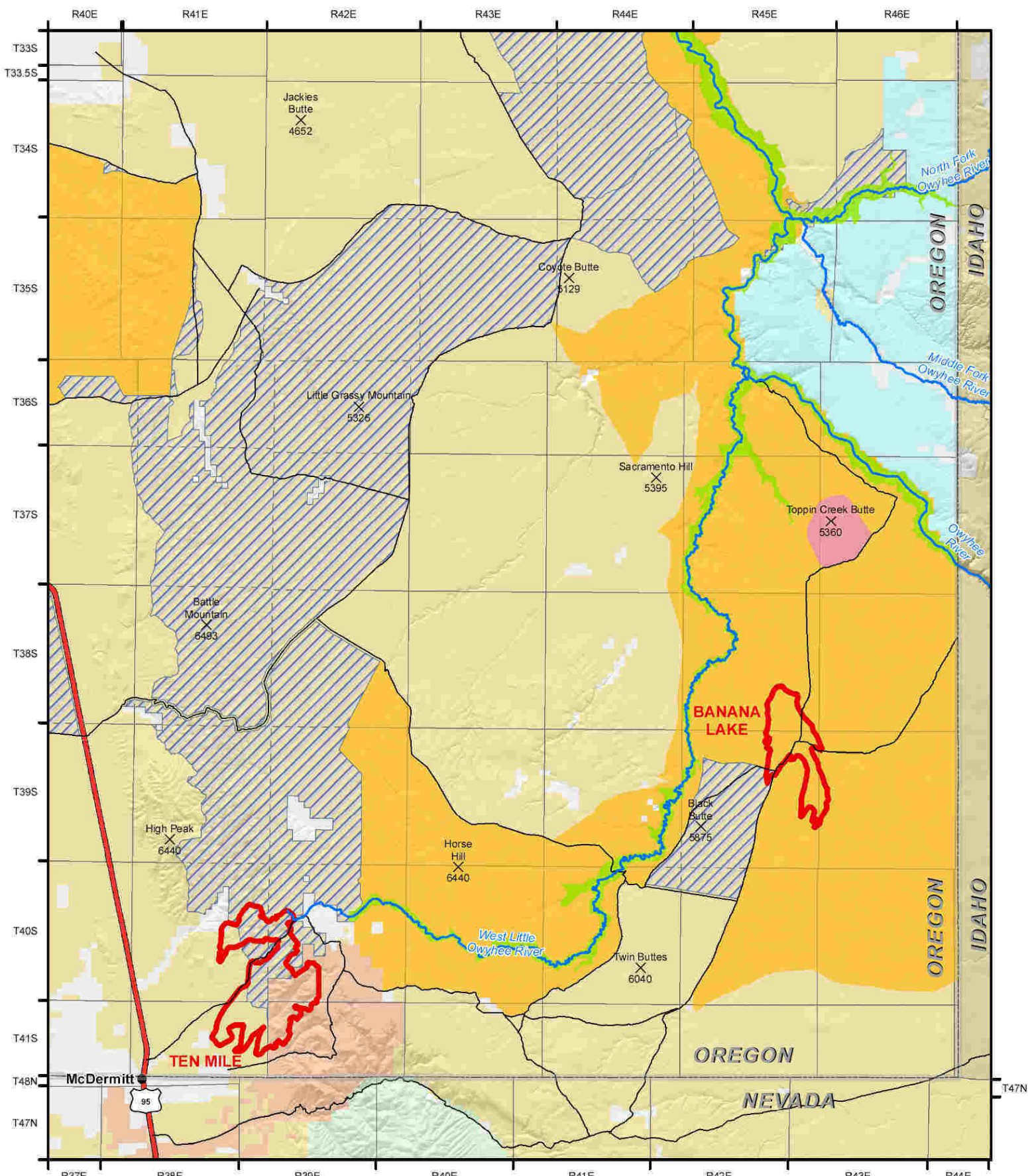
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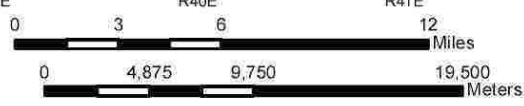
Map 4
Drill Seeding Area
Ten Mile Complex (G5TU) - Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation







- Ten Mile Complex Perimeter
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness Study Area
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
- Primary Routes



Map 7
Special Management Areas
Ten Mile Complex (G5TU)- Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation

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